



**OCALA / MARION COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
ORGANIZATION (TPO)**

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN
(PIP)**

**ADOPTED
07/11/2018**

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PURPOSE

Public Involvement is at the center of the transportation planning process, as transportation networks affect the public in a variety of ways. Therefore, the voice of the public is essential in ensuring that the transportation decisions that are made, are efficient, and effective at serving the residents they impact. The Ocala/Marion Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) Public Involvement Plan (PIP) documents the goals, objectives, and strategies for ensuring that all individuals have every opportunity to be involved in transportation planning decisions. As the transportation network effects economic vitality, personal and freight mobility, and local/regional priorities it is critical for the voices of everyone to be heard and documented.

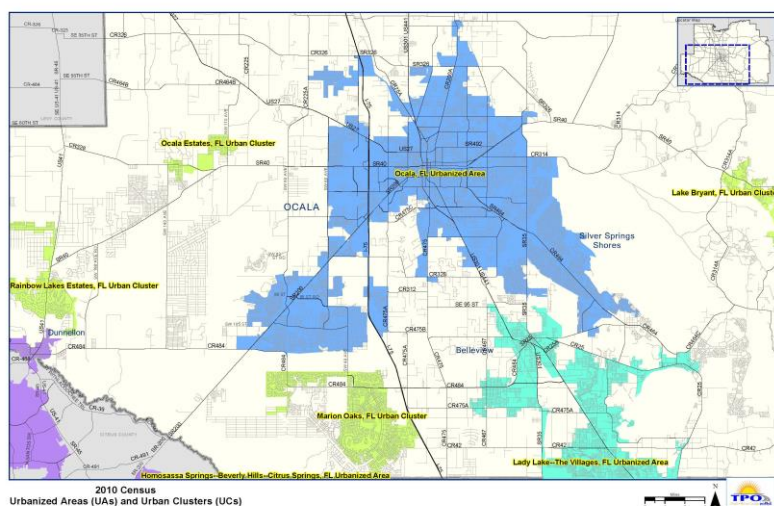
It is the primary goal of this document to increase awareness on the various opportunities that are available to the public, and the measurements used by the TPO to determine our effectiveness with advertising and promoting those opportunities. The TPO is committed to ensuring that all individuals can be involved, especially those communities who have been traditionally under-served and under-represented.

1.0 TPO HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

History

The Federal Highway Act of 1962 established legislation that mandated that any urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more that plans to expend United States Department of Transportation funding must subscribe to a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive ('The 3-C') planning process.

The Ocala/Marion County TPO was established to provide a forum for the development of transportation policy and transportation planning services for the Ocala/Marion County area. The TPO was established in 1981 after the US Census Bureau determined that the urbanized population of Marion County had surpassed the threshold of 50,000 people. The Ocala/Marion County urbanized area includes the Cities of Ocala, Belleview and Dunnellon and their surrounding areas, and the adjoining areas between Ocala and Belleview. Also included are the



areas of Silver Springs Shores and Marion Oaks, the SR 200 corridor to CR 484 and the US 441 corridor from Belleview to the Lake County line east of US 301 and west of CR 25. Additional Urban Clusters have been identified at Lake Bryant, Ocala Estates and Rainbow Lakes Estates (See Figure 1). The planning boundaries for the TPO include all of Marion County.

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Committees/Board Structure

The Ocala/Marion TPO is supported by a diverse subcommittee structure that provides input from a variety of sources. A description of each of the elements of this structure and the TPO Board is listed below.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of up to 16 Marion County residents who provide input to the TPO from a citizen's point of view. Appointments to this committee are made through an application process where the candidates are interviewed by TPO staff and are then recommended to the TPO board for membership. The TPO board then votes on approval of each candidate's appointment. Considerations for appointment are based on the geographic location, interviews and overall background of each candidate. The Ocala/Marion County TPO strives to maintain a cross-section of Marion County citizens in order to provide a well-rounded review of transportation issues both geographically and professionally.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) membership is comprised of twelve members who are planners, engineers, technicians and other professionals representing local and state government agencies and local transit providers. The TAC recommendations are based on the professional experience of the committee members.

The TAC is comprised of the representatives from the following organizations:

- *The City of Belleview: Development Services*
- *The City of Dunnellon: Community Development*
- *The City of Ocala: Traffic Engineering*
- *The City of Ocala: Growth Management*
- *Marion County Board of County Commissioners: Traffic Engineering*
- *Marion County Board of County Commissioners: Growth Services*
- *Marion County Public Schools*
- *The Florida Department of Environmental Protection: Office of Greenways & Trails*
- *The Florida Department of Transportation*
- *SunTran*

Both the CAC and TAC offer input from their varying perspectives, whether that be in a professional sense (planners, engineers, etc.) or from a citizen perspective (local residents). These committees both garner feedback, input, advice, and recommendations for staff to present to the TPO Board.



The TPO Board

The TPO board is the final level of review and decision-making body in the TPO organizational structure. Recommendations from TPO staff and the committee substructure are reviewed, discussed and then either approved or rejected through a one member-one vote process.

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The TPO Board voting membership is comprised of one representative from the City of Belleview City Commission and the City of Dunnellon City Council, five members from the city council of the City of Ocala and the five county commissioners from the Marion County Board of County Commissioners. The FDOT-District Five Secretary is also a non-voting member of the TPO Board

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the TPO Board shall be held at least quarterly. At the last regular meeting of each year, the TPO will approve the following year's meeting schedule. Regular meeting dates and times may be changed by the chairman or vice-chairman to accommodate special circumstances such as holidays.

Special Meetings

A special meeting of the TPO Board may be called by the Chairman. Each member of the TPO and local media services will receive a notification of such special meeting stating the date, hour and place of the meeting and the purpose for which such meeting is called, and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.

Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is comprised of up to sixteen members and is charged with oversight of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). The membership is comprised of one representative each from the City of Ocala, Marion County Public School board, the FDOT, and various health and labor not-for-profit organizations. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged provides funding to the CTC to provide transportation to local residents. The TDLCB is responsible for reviewing the performance of the CTC and establishing trip priorities.

The TDLCB is comprised of representatives from the following organizations:

- *Marion County Board of County Commissioners*
- *Marion County Department of Veteran Affairs*
- *Marion County Public Schools*
- *The City of Ocala*
- *Ocala Housing Authority*
- *Centers for Independent Living*
- *CLM Workforce*
- *Florida Center for the Blind*
- *The Agency for Health Care Administration*
- *The Agency for Persons with Disabilities*
- *The Florida Department of Education*
- *The Florida Department of Elder Affairs*
- *The Florida Department of Health – Marion County*
- *The Florida Department of Transportation*

The public is encouraged to attend all TPO committee and board meetings. Meetings are advertised on the websites of the TPO, Marion County and the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon and

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Ocala as well as the TPO's most current social media site in accordance with the notification requirements of **Florida Statute s.286.011, F.S.**

2.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS, POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

Goal: The public involvement process is intended to provide accurate and timely information about ongoing or upcoming transportation planning projects.

Objective #1: *The TPO shall encourage participation by all Marion County citizens in the transportation planning process.*

The TPO shall:

- Policy 1.1: Strive to include those citizens that are among the traditionally underserved and under-represented, including business owners and residents who are a part of but not limited to, low-income and minority households.
- Policy 1.2: Whenever possible, hold public meetings at locations that are easily accessible to potentially affected residents and business owners.
- Policy 1.3: Schedule public involvement activities, to the maximum extent possible, at key decision-making points, during the development of TPO projects.
- Policy 1.4: Assist in making arrangements, with reasonable notice of at least 48 hours, for any citizen who requires special accommodations while attending any TPO related events.
- Policy 1.5: Provide timely and comprehensive information that is easily understandable to the average citizen.
- Policy 1.6: Strive to continuously enhance the public awareness and knowledge of transportation related issues in an effort to foster increased trust and to maintain and continually increase credibility with the public.
- Policy 1.7: Ensure that all TPO sponsored meetings, where two or more elected officials are present, will be subject to the rules of Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law.

Measurement

- Hold meetings in various locations, and times to ensure a large part of the populace has the opportunity to voice any questions, concerns, or support. Keep an updated log of all events, activities, and locations.
- Keep a log of any accommodations that were provided to individuals upon request, such as translation of materials or a translator for any Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons.

Objective #2: *The TPO shall continually notify and provide updates to the public of all upcoming and ongoing TPO transportation related activities.*

The TPO shall:

- Policy 2.1: Continually update the TPO website in order to ensure that the most current versions of all TPO publications are readily available to the public.

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- Policy 2.2: Post notices of all upcoming meetings and hearings on the TPO website.
- Policy 2.3: Post updates on the status of upcoming and ongoing roadway projects.
- Policy 2.4: Post agendas and meeting packets of all upcoming CAC, TAC, TDLCB and TPO board meetings on the TPO website.
- Policy 2.5: Maintain a contact database for mailing and electronic notification of all interested residents and organizations of upcoming meetings, hearings or projects.
- Policy 2.6: Create and distribute flyers and newsletters to inform the public of upcoming projects and the status of ongoing projects.
- Policy 2.7: Have staff available to address private and public organizations, as requested and with reasonable notice, about TPO or other transportation related activities.
- Policy 2.8: Have staff available at the TPO office during normal business hours to provide project specific and/or general information about TPO or other transportation related activities.
- Policy 2.9: Make all documentation and data available, with reasonable notice, upon public request.

Measurement

- Continual update of the TPO website, and plans.
- Continually advertise for upcoming events, plan updates, and scheduled TPO activities.
- Look for new ways to promote and advertise to increase awareness of events, and activities.

Objective #3: *The TPO shall continually identify, and where applicable, implement new methods to improve the overall public involvement process.*

The TPO shall:

- Policy 3.1: Utilize continuing education and training courses to increase the communication, written and presentation skills of TPO staff.
- Policy 3.2: Continually seek increasingly effective methods to enhance public involvement and community outreach activities.
- Policy 3.3: Review all public involvement activities for continued viability.
- Policy 3.4: Ensure that the most effective public outreach techniques are utilized for the appropriate tasks.
- Policy 3.5: Communicate with other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to stay informed about the status of other public involvement programs.

Measurement

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- TPO staff will keep records of any continuing education/seminars/webinars taken throughout the year.
- Will seek out new training opportunities throughout the year.
- Actively recruit a diverse group of new members for committees through our local partners and connections.

3.0 PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 LONG RANGE ACTIVITIES

Public participation is especially crucial in the development of any long-term plan or program. The activities listed below shape the development and implementation of the transportation system over the course of several years. To obtain the highest level of public participation, individual participation plans are developed for each activity. The tools utilized can include large public meetings, small community or civic group meetings, interactive sessions, or displays at public events.

3.1.1 Long Range Transportation Plan

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is the cornerstone of the transportation planning process for the Ocala/Marion County area. The LRTP serves as a twenty-five-year blueprint for transportation improvements for the entire county. The plan projects future population and employment and analyzes their impact on the anticipated transportation system. In addition, it includes goals, objectives and financial projections as well as estimates of future traffic.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
Cornerstone of the transportation planning process
Serves as a 20 to 25-year blueprint for transportation improvements & projects
Analyzes future population, employment, and economic growth
Includes financial projections
A 30-Day Public Comment Period
Updated every 5 years

3.1.2 Transit Development Plan

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) serves as the five-year plan for public transportation services for the area. The TPO's first TDP, adopted in March 1996, laid the foundation for the development and startup of SunTran, the area's first fixed-route, urban bus service. The TDP also reviews the paratransit system administered by Marion Transit Services (MTS). An update of the TDP was completed in August 2012 and included analysis of expansion of SunTran through additional routes and expanded hours as well as potential increases of service levels for MTS.

3.1.3 Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan provides the framework for a ten-year planning horizon that identifies key bicycling and pedestrian facilities, projects and policy direction. This program is the first step in establishing a contiguous system of bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout Marion County. The first master plan was adopted in 1997. An update to the initial document was completed in September of 2014 by identifying new facilities and deficiencies, adding an extensive trails component and updating policies.

3.1.4 Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan

The Ocala/Marion TPO is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded or discriminated against because of their race, color, or national origin as identified as part of Title VI of the Civil

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Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. Therefore, through the planning process of plan updates, committee meetings, and associated TPO activities, staff has used and will continue to use a variety of outreach strategies to incorporate all individuals throughout the community. These include stakeholder interviews, community meetings, project specific website like www.planocalamarion.com which was used for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update, and in-person meetings. In addition, any board meeting is open to the public and there is opportunity for public comment.

Strategies for outreach include holding public activities, and community meetings in locations that are accessible to all individuals. Therefore, meetings are held in Silver Springs Shores, Marion Oaks Civic Association, City of Dunnellon, City of Belleview, as well as throughout the City of Ocala. This ensures that all communities have the chance to be involved without having to travel long distances in order for their voices to be heard. Also, it is defined by Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice, that communities that have been traditionally underserved were involved throughout the transportation planning process.

Please see **APPENDIX C** for the TPOs Title VI Policy and complaint procedure. For information on instructions on how to file a complaint, a complaint form, a list of Title VI investigations, complaints, or lawsuits, please see the TPOs Title VI Plan at the following website <http://www.ocalamariontpo.org/what-we-do/plans-and-programs>.

3.1.5 Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The purpose of the LEP is to increase awareness and provide meaningful access to all TPO plans, programs, meetings, and events to individuals with limited to no ability to speak, read, or write English. The TPO is committed to increasing awareness to all individuals, including those that have been traditionally underserved, such as those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Both the TPO and SunTran websites can be translated into more than 100 languages so that access is available to all citizens. For more information regarding the TPO's LEP plan, please see the appendix section of the Title VI Plan on the TPOs website <http://www.ocalamariontpo.org/what-we-do/plans-and-programs>.

3.2 ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

Throughout the course of any given year, the TPO is required to produce or update a varied number of documents that detail various aspects of the transportation planning process. A majority of these documents are reviewed by both the CAC and TAC for recommendation and then forwarded to the TPO for final approval. While the TPO strives to keep annual activities on a consistent schedule, the timeframes listed may shift slightly from year to year. Please check the TPO website at www.ocalamariontpo.org for the most up-to-date information regarding any activities. The following chart is a summary of the schedule, and public comment/notice periods for the governing board, committees, and required plans of the TPO:

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Opportunities for Public Participation		Schedule	Public Comment Period	Public Notice
Meetings				
Governing Board	Ocala/Marion TPO	Meets 4th Tuesday of Every Month	Every Meeting	7 days
Committees	TAC, CAC	Meets Monthly	Every Meeting	7 days
	TDLCB*	Meets Quarterly	Every Meeting	7 days
Program Adoption				
Long Range Transportation Plan	L RTP	Every Five Years	30 Days*	30 Days
Transportation Improvement Program	TIP	Every Year (May & October)	30 Days	30 Days
Unified Planning Work Program	UPWP	Every Two Years (July 1 st)	30 Days	30 Days
Public Involvement Plan	PIP	Every Three Years	45 Days	45 Days
Transit Development Plan	TDP	Every Five Years	30 Days	30 Days
Program Amendments				
Long Range Transportation Plan	L RTP	As Needed	30 Days	30 days
Transportation Improvement Program	TIP	As Needed	7 Days	7 days
Unified Planning Work Program	UPWP	As Needed	7 Days	7 days
Public Involvement Plan	PIP	As Needed	7 Days	7 days
Transit Development Plan	TDP	As Needed	7 Days	7 days

* The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) requires a public hearing. Public Hearings satisfy specific regulatory requirements. Whereas, Public meetings are held throughout the planning process to gather citizen input, and feedback. In addition, the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Committee holds an annual public hearing. For more information about Public hearings see section 4.0.2 regarding Legal Advertisements.

3.2.1 Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is produced on a biennial basis and serves as the TPO's work plan for a given fiscal year. The UPWP outlines various tasks and programs for which the TPO is responsible and lists projected expenditures. It also identifies funding sources

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(federal, state and local) and their contribution. The UPWP is developed over a four-month period beginning in February. The initial draft is developed by staff and reviewed by the CAC and TAC then the TPO board reviews and approves or recommends modifications to the draft version of the document. The draft is then transmitted to the FDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for review. These agencies provide comments back to TPO staff prior to final adoption. If there are substantial revisions required as a result of multi-agency comments, the final draft is again reviewed by the CAC and TAC prior to submittal to the TPO for final approval. Otherwise, the final draft is submitted directly to the TPO board in May.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Outlines various tasks the TPO is responsible for
Identifies funding sources and their contributions from our local partners
Developed every 2 years (Must be adopted by July 1 st when developed)
A 30-Day Public Comment Period

3.2.2 Priority Project Review

Each year the TPO is required to review its Project Priorities listing. The Project Priority process is used to rank the significance of future transportation projects which establishes a preferred hierarchy for funding eligibility that is used as a guideline by the FDOT. Beginning in May, TPO staff makes recommendations to both the CAC and TAC for the current year priorities. After a 30-day review, the CAC and TAC make a final recommendation to the TPO board in June. The TPO board then reviews the listing and approves a final list for submittal to the FDOT in August.

3.2.3 Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) serves as the TPO's five-year transportation budget. It lists all transportation projects and their costs for a five-year period. The TIP includes projects from all modes of transportation (highway, transit, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian) as well as maintenance and resurfacing. By federal law, the TIP must be financially feasible based on available revenues. Since the State of Florida operates on a different fiscal year than local governments (July 1 –June 30 vs. October 1 – September 30), the TIP is updated twice each year in June and October to maintain consistency with the FDOT. The June update includes federal and state projects included in FDOT Five-Year Work Program. The October "Roll-Forward" update also includes local projects adopted as part of each municipality's respective budget process.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
A 5-year transportation budget
Lists all projects upcoming within a 5-year period
Includes all modes of transportation
Includes projects from the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
A 30-Day Public Comment Period
Updated every year (Usually May & October)

Amendments to or Removals from Transportation Improvement Program

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The existing federally approved TIP can be modified at any time when there is a joint agreement between the TPO and FDOT. Modification of a current TIP may require amendment to the FDOT Adopted Work Program. The district may amend the Adopted Work Program based on projects that require mid-year rescheduling, however; any project change requires joint action by the TPO and the FDOT.

Upon TPO endorsement of the TIP modification, a copy of the modification is sent to the district and DCA for consistency review purposes. Therefore, the TPO may not remove or reschedule any local City, County, or City/County funded level of service project from the current TIP to a subsequent TIP without an amendment. However, if a locally funded project is a non-level of service requirement, the TPO may unilaterally add, remove, or reschedule any project to the TIP.

Action by the District Secretary is required for all joint TIP amendments that involves the FDOT Adopted Work Program that is to be advanced, deleted, or rescheduled pursuant to the following provisions of paragraph 339.135(7) (c), F.S.:

- (a) Any amendment that deletes any projects or project phase;
- (b) Any amendment which adds a project estimated to cost over \$150,000;
- (c) Any amendment which advances or defers to another fiscal year, a right of way phase, a construction phase, or a public transportation project phase estimated to cost over \$500,000, except an amendment advancing or deferring a phase for a period of 90 days or less; or
- (d) Any amendment which advances or defers to another fiscal year, any preliminary engineering phase or design phase estimated to cost over \$150,000, except an amendment advancing or deferring a phase for a period of 90 days or less.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

This section defines the strategies and tools that are currently utilized to facilitate the public involvement process.

4.0.0 Public Notice

A Public Notice is a form of advertisement for any TPO meetings, events, workshops, plans or plan updates. The TPO advertises in multiple jurisdictions across Marion County, which include the Cities of Dunnellon, Belleview, Ocala, and Marion County. In addition, advertisements will be sent to the local newspaper, The Ocala Star Banner. Please refer to the following sections for specific strategies and tools utilized by the TPO for public outreach and involvement.

4.0.1 TPO Website

The TPO website features information on current and upcoming construction projects, priority projects, committee descriptions, meeting schedules and times, TPO staff contact information and sections that allow for the download of most TPO documents such as the Traffic Count book, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan and the current version of the Interactive TIP. The website is continually updated and maintained by TPO staff. The TPO website is the primary location of the most up-to-date information regarding all TPO activities.



4.0.2 Legal Advertisements

Formal notifications are distributed to the print media for publication in the legal section of local newspapers, at least two weeks in advance, to notify the public about upcoming TPO hearings. The Long-Range Transportation Plan requires a Public Hearing as it contains federal and state funded major transportation improvements. The Florida Department of Transportation defines a major transportation improvement in accordance with state law (Chapter 339.155, F.S.) as a project that increases capacity, builds new facilities, or provides new access to limited-access facilities. In addition, the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) requires an annual public hearing.

4.0.3 Press Releases

General or official notifications are distributed to different media sources to inform the public of upcoming and ongoing transportation projects or other TPO related activities.

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4.0.4 Project Update Meetings

Project Update Meetings are held to keep the public informed on the progress of specific projects, plans or studies. These meetings typically begin approximately midway through a project, plan or study analysis period and additional meetings are conducted until the requisite action is completed.

4.0.5 Community Meetings

Community Meetings are held to solicit public opinion as related to a wide range of TPO sponsored activities. They are utilized in a variety of different planning activities from the development of individual projects all the way up to area-wide activities such as development of the LRTP. These meetings can be designed as broadly as to implore area wide attendance or specifically targeted towards individual groups such as civic organizations, homeowner's associations, special-interest groups, municipalities and local-elected officials.

4.0.6 Civic Groups

Civic Groups are specifically engaged in order to assemble diverse perspectives from groups that are organized around a common interest or in pursuit of a common cause. These groups can be composed of, but not limited to minorities, low-income citizens, the physically challenged and/or the elderly.

4.0.7 Newsletters

Newsletters are used to inform the public about the activities of the TPO or provide status updates on current or upcoming projects. They can be general in nature by providing quarterly or yearly synopses of TPO activities or more project-specific by focusing on individual phases of ongoing projects, plans or studies.

4.0.8 Maps

Printed maps are used in every type of TPO public involvement activity to provide a visible reference so participants are able to more effectively relate to the data that is being presented. Maps can be as small as a sheet of paper for inclusions in hand-outs or packets, or as large or larger than 'poster-size' to be openly displayed during meetings.

4.0.9 Surveys

Surveys are a standardized and structured method of soliciting input about specific topics, plans, or projects from the public. Surveys can also be used to collect technical or quantifiable data such as travel pattern information, number of miles driven to work or average number of trips driven per day.

4.0.10 Comment Forms

Comment forms are used to solicit public input about specific topics or presentations at public workshops or meetings. They are also used to allow the public to gauge different elements of those workshops and meetings, such as the quality of the presentation, clarity of the topic, staff knowledge and professionalism.

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To whom it may concern:

The TPO staff welcomes and encourages public comment and participation at all TPO related meetings. If you wish to have a staff member contact you to discuss concerns in greater detail, or if you would just like to formally make a comment regarding any TPO matter, please fill out the following comment form.

We thank you in advance for contributing to the transportation planning process in Marion County.

Name _____

Address _____

Contact Information _____

Comments: (please use back of page, if needed)

4.0.11 Posted Mail & E-Mail/Automated E-Mail Systems

Traditional and digital mailings are utilized to notify individuals and/or organizations about upcoming meetings, hearings or the status of a specific project and to transmit agendas. Posted mail can be postcards, flyers, agendas, newsletters or letters.

4.0.12 Sign-In Sheets & Contact Database

All TPO sponsored events utilize sign-in sheets to record citizen participation and to use as a basis for the construction of a contact database that is maintained by TPO staff or contracted consultants. Contact databases are used to notify all previous participants about significant upcoming events and to distribute newsletters either by e-mail or posted mail.

4.0.13 TPO Logo

The TPO logo is included on all TPO publications to signify the origin of the document or product. Any documents produced by the TPO, or by a consultant for the TPO, will feature the TPO logo. The TPO logo was updated in 2010.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

A.1 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Federal and State Law require all MPOs/TPOs to provide consideration for projects that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized uses;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
- Enhance the integration of connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

A.2 Federal Requirements

- **The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)** of 1991 was landmark legislation for the future of transportation in the United States. ISTEA was unprecedented in its requirement that the “planning processes consider such factors as land-use and the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of transportation decisions.” Additionally, ISTEA recognized that:
 - The inclusion of public outreach practices in the planning process is of critical importance as it allows the citizens and organizations to voice concerns and recommendations for individual plans or projects;
 - the Interstate Highway System is nearly complete and preservation rather than expansion is the higher priority;
 - a well integrated multi-modal transportation network is more efficient at moving freight and passengers than an independent, loosely connected series of transportation modes;
 - protection of the natural and human environments is important to the overall welfare of the population;
 - there should be accessibility to and equity in the provision of transportation services;
 - development patterns are rapidly changing, and the need to provide metropolitan planning areas with more control over their jurisdictions is paramount;
- On June 9, 1998, the President signed into law **PL 105-178 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)**. **TEA-21** continues to build on the emphasis placed on transportation by **ISTEA**. **TEA-21** can be viewed at www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21.
- On August 10, 2005 the President signed into law the **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Efficiency Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**. With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$286.4 billion, SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in our nation's history. The two landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century—the **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)** and the **Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)**—shaped the highway program

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to meet the nation's changing transportation needs. **SAFETEA-LU** continues to build on that firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and grow our vital transportation infrastructure.

- SAFETEA-LU can be viewed at www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu.
- “In October 1993, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration jointly issued regulations found in **23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450** to guide the development of statewide, local and metropolitan plans and programs.” These regulations include the following:
 - Early and continuous public involvement opportunities throughout the planning and programming process;
 - Timely information to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private sector transportation entities and other interested parties, including segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects;
 - Reasonable access to information;
 - Adequate public notice of public involvement activities and ample time for public review and comment at key decision points;
 - Explicit consideration and response to public comment;
 - Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved, including low-income and minority citizens;
 - Periodic review of the public involvement efforts by the MPO/TPO to ensure full open access to all;
 - Review of public involvement procedures by the FHWA and FTA when necessary; and
 - Coordination of the MPO/TPO public involvement processes with statewide efforts whenever possible.

This code, in its entirety, can be accessed at www.access.gpo.gov/uscode.

- In January of 2003, **23 USC 135** was enacted. It provides for the reasonable access to comment on proposed plans. This code, in its entirety, can be accessed at www.access.gpo.gov/uscode.
- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** - This title declares it to be the policy of the United States that discrimination on the ground of race, color, or national origin shall not occur in connection with programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance and authorizes and directs the appropriate Federal departments and agencies to take action to carry out this policy. This title is not intended to apply to foreign assistance programs. **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** can be accessed, in its entirety, at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/title_vi.htm.
- **28 CFR 36 – The Americans with Disabilities Act** was signed into legislation in July of 1990. It requires all government programs to be accessible to people with disabilities. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that reasonable efforts be made to accommodate citizens with disabilities who wish to attend public meetings. **28 CFR 36** can be accessed at www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm.

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- In February of 1994, **Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice** was signed into legislation. This order addresses avoidance of actions that can cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations. **Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice** can be accessed at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/facts/index.htm.

A.3 State Requirements

- **s.339.155, F.S.**, provides for public involvement in transportation planning. It states that citizens, public agencies, and other known interested parties be given sufficient opportunity to comment on the long-range component of the Florida Transportation Plan. It also states that hearings are a required element during the development of major transportation improvements.
This statute can be viewed at www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/federal/files/339ana01.pdf.
- **s.339.175, F.S.**, requires public involvement in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This statute can be viewed at www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/federal/files/339ana01.pdf.

s.286.011, F.S. – “The Sunshine Law” – Founded in 1967, the Sunshine Law “establishes a basic right of access to most meetings of boards, commissions and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities. The Sunshine Law requires that meetings of boards or commissions be open to the public, reasonable notice of such meetings be given, and minutes taken and made available to the public in a timely manner.” The Sunshine Law can be viewed, in its entirety, at www.myfloridalegal.com/sunshine.



The TPO staff welcomes and encourages public comment and participation at all TPO related meetings. If you wish to have a staff member contact you to discuss concerns in greater detail, or if you would just like to formally make a comment regarding any TPO matter, please fill out the following comment form.

Name_____

Address _____

Contact Information _____

Comments: (please use back of page, if needed) Date_____

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APPENDIX C

Title VI Policy & Complaint Procedure

Title VI Policy

The Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from the transportation planning process on because of their race, color, or national origin as identified as part of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Title VI Complaint Procedure

Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation by the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization may file a verbal or written complaint as such actions are prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Verbal and non-written complaints received by the TPO shall be resolved by the Director. The Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint(s) and within ten (10) calendar days inform the Complainant in writing of any action taken or proposed action to address the complaint(s). If actions that have been taken or are proposed to be taken to resolve the situation are not satisfactory to the Complainant, the Director will advise the Complainant to file a written complaint in the manner outlined in the Written Complaint Section.

The staff of the Ocala/Marion TPO will maintain a log of all verbal and non-written complaints received by the agency. The log will include all of the following information:

- Name of Complainant;
- Name of Respondent;
- Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status, or retaliation);
- Date complaint received;
- Explanation of the complaint and the actions that have been taken or are proposed to resolve the issue raised in the complaint.

Written Complaints

If the Complainant does not feel that verbal or non-written procedures have satisfactorily resolved the complaint, or if any time the person(s) request(s) to file a written complaint, the Director shall refer the Complainant to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five Title VI Coordinator for processing in accordance with approved State procedures. Additionally, the Director shall advise the Complainant of other avenues of redress that are available, such as the Florida Department of Transportation's Equal Opportunity Office (EOO). Additionally, if the Director has previously investigated the complaint, he or she will provide a copy of the reported finding and proposed disposition to the FDOT District Five Title VI Coordinator.

All written complainants received by the Ocala/Marion County TPO shall be immediately referred by the Director to the FDOT District Five Title VI Coordinator. The Director will

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advise the FDOT District Five Title VI Coordinator within five (5) calendar days of the receipt of the complaint. The following information will be included in every notification to the FDOT District Five Title VI Coordinator:

- Name, address, and phone number of the Complainant;
- Name(s) and address(es) of the Respondent;
- Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status, or retaliation);
- Date of alleged discriminatory act(s);
- Date of complaint received by the Ocala/Marion County TPO;
- A statement of the complaint;
- Other agencies (state, local, or federal) where the complaint has been filed;
- An explanation of the actions the Director has taken to or proposed to resolve the complaint(s).